

Ragpicker

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Maj. Gen. Charles A. Willoughby, an intelligence officer unbeloved by the Korean war correspondents, has taken out after his critics with a verbal shillelagh in the pages of the current *Cosmopolitan* magazine. His prose style shows a fondness for alliteration, a nice feeling for epithets and a strong tendency toward MacArthurian inversions. Moreover, he is catholic in his distastes. The list of newspapermen he ticks off is long—and, in our humble judgment, highly honorable: Hal Boyle and Homer Bigart, Christopher Rand and Hanson Baldwin, Drew Pearson and Joseph Alsop. "Careless chroniclers," he calls them with a careless rhetorical flourish, "ragpickers of modern literature, roughly between belles-lettres and the police blotter." Rather good, don't you think—that is, for an intelligence officer?

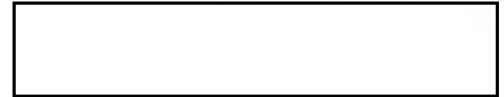
General Willoughby has prejudices concerning certain publications as well. *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U. S. News & World Report* all appear to have been guilty of "brazen juggling of figures and the inferential, if not calculated, deception of the public." The sweep of his denigration makes it seem almost as though everyone had been out of step but Willoughby. But the suggestion that Willoughby might be mistaken, or might have been mistaken at any stage of the Korean campaign, is unthinkable. Did he not advise General MacArthur, and did not General MacArthur follow his advice? To attribute error to the subordinate would be, then, to attribute error to the chief. And this would be to take part in what General MacArthur, in a foreword to General Willoughby's *Cosmopolitan* article, calls "one of the most scandalous propaganda efforts to pervert the truth in recent times."

Well, no doubt it did General Willoughby a lot of good to get all this invective off his chest. Whether it helped to raise his reputation from the depths into which the ragpickers had plunged it, and whether it will serve to restore General MacArthur to his now somewhat pockmarked pedestal, is not so clear. General Willoughby thinks that the "atmosphere of tension, uneasiness and distrust between Tokyo and Washington" created by the correspondents was "the major cause of the MacArthur-Truman split." For our own part, we are inclined to think that the major cause of the split was an incurable tendency on the part of the Far East commander and his intelligence officer to refer to this relationship as "MacArthur-Truman" instead of Truman-MacArthur. They never understood the importance of this priority.

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Willoughby archives

Chief

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